UMMUL MOMINEEN

ZAINAB

BINT KHUZAIMAH

زینب بِنت خُذَیمه رضئ الله تعالی عنها

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ZAINAB BINT KHUZAIMA

(رضئ الله تعالى عنہا)

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بِسم الله الرحمنِ الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلاة والسلام
على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين

UMMUL MOMINEEN ZAINAB BINT KHUZAIMAH (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا)

BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE

Long before she ever entered the household of Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) Zainab bint Khuzaimah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) was known throughout Makkah by a name that reflected the depth of her soul: 'Umm al-Masakin'—*Mother of the Poor*. This title was not given to her as a formality, but earned through years of quiet compassion, boundless generosity, and tireless service to those in need.

She was born in Makkah, likely around 595 CE, into the tribe of Banu Hilal, a noble Arab clan known for its strength and honor. Her father, Khuzaimah ibn al-Ḥarith, was a respected figure in his tribe, and her mother, Hind bint Awf, was among the notable women of her time—remarkable for the righteous offspring she raised, many of whom would go on to become part of the earliest Muslim community.

Zainab (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) was raised in a society steeped in tribal customs, social stratification, and often merciless hierarchies. Yet even in the era of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance), she was recognized for her *rahmah*—her tender-hearted mercy. Where others might preserve their wealth and status, Zainab gave with a heart that never sought recognition. It was said that she would find

the hungry before they asked, clothe the orphan before they were seen, and comfort the grieving before they could voice their sorrow.

Her generosity was not seasonal or circumstantial, it was woven into her nature. Widows, travelers, the ill, and the needy all found a safe harbor in Zainab's presence. And this was before she entered Islam. Even before divine revelation confirmed the virtues of compassion and charity, Zainab (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) lived as though guided by the principles the Quran would later affirm.

It is not precisely recorded when she embraced Islam, but sources agree she was among the early female believers, likely influenced by the new message of equality, justice, and spiritual nearness to Allah. She would carry her same passion for helping others into her life as a Muslim—only now refined and focused by divine purpose.

She married more than once before becoming one of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) wives, with the most notable of her husband being Abdullah ibn Jahsh (رضئ الله تعالى عنه), a close Companion of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) and a fellow emigrant to Madinah. Her life as a married woman was also marked by generosity and spiritual strength, and when her husband was martyred at the Battle of Uḥud, she faced her loss with patience and tawakkul (trust in Allah).

But her story did not end in grief. Soon, Allah would elevate her with a unique honor—one that very few women in all of history could claim.

Abdullah ibn Jahsh (رضئ الله تعالى عنه), a beloved Companion of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), known for his sincerity and bravery was also the brother of Zainab bint Jahsh (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا), another wife of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم). Like his wife, Abdullah was among the earliest converts to Islam, and he endured the trials of persecution in Makkah, eventually making the Hijrah (emigration) to Madinah.

Their life together in Madinah was short but grounded in faith and simplicity. Zainab continued her mission of serving the poor, feeding them, clothing them, and consoling those in sorrow. She was never content living in comfort while others suffered, and even in the face of war and instability, her home remained a shelter for the weak.

Her world changed dramatically in 3 AH, when her husband Abdullah was martyred in the Battle of Uḥud, one of the most emotionally painful moments in early Islamic history. He died defending the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), falling among the honored shuhada (martyrs) of Islam. Zainab (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) bore this loss with patience and tawakkul (reliance on Allah), just as she had faced every trial in her life—with grace, humility, and submission to the will of her Lord.

Now a widow, Zainab was left without material support, but her dignity and generosity remained untouched. She continued to live modestly in Madinah, immersed in worship and charity, never burdening anyone, never demanding more than her daily bread. Her character was known and beloved among the Muslims—so much so that even in her quietness, her reputation reached the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), who would soon honor her with a marriage that preserved her legacy for eternity.

She had already been given a unique title—'Umm al-Masakin' (Mother of the Poor)—a name that preceded her entry into the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) household and defined the essence of her life. It was this silent nobility that made her one of the few women in history to be chosen as a Mother of the Believers.

MARRIAGE TO THE PROPHET (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم)

In the months following the Battle of Uḥud, the city of Madinah was still marked by the sorrow of its martyrs. Among the women left behind was Zainab bint Khuzaimah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا)—a widow whose husband, Abdullah ibn Jahsh (رضئ الله تعالى عنه), had fallen as a martyr. Her grief was quiet but deep, borne with the same patience and grace that had defined her life. Alone and with little means, she continued her service to the poor and needy, even as her own provisions were meagre.

It was during this time that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), recognizing both her piety and her plight, sent her a proposal of marriage. As with his other marriages to widows, the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) intention was motivated by mercy, support, and spiritual kinship. He sought to honor her devotion and ease her burden, bringing her into his blessed household.

Zainab (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) accepted the proposal with humility. The marriage took place in 4 AH (625 CE). It was a simple union, not marked by celebration or elaborate ceremony, but solemnized by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) with the quiet dignity befitting both of their stations. Despite its brief duration, this marriage elevated Zainab to the rank of Ummul Momineen (Mother of the Believers)—a title that ensured her respect and protection for the rest of her life, and in the hearts of Muslims for all time.

Unlike some of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) other wives, Zainab did not live long enough to narrate hadiths or play an extensive role in the communal affairs of the Ummah. But her presence in his life, however brief, was meaningful. She brought with her a spirit of compassion, quiet worship, and social concern—qualities that complemented the moral vision of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) household.

Her new role did not change her. She remained the 'Umm al-Masakin', continuing her work of feeding and clothing the needy, now with the added resources and honor afforded to the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) wives. She was no longer impoverished, but her heart remained anchored in service. She used her new position not for comfort, but as a means to give more.

Though her time with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) was short—only about two to three months—she left behind a powerful example. In a society where women were often remembered only for their beauty or lineage, Zainab (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) is remembered for her generosity, her humility, and the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) recognition of her virtue.

She would not live long enough to see the later victories of Islam, but her name would endure among the most honored—not because of public leadership or political influence, but because of the purity of her heart and the sanctity of her intentions.

Only two to three months after her marriage to the Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم), Zainab (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا) fell ill. Her departure from this world came quietly in 4 AH (625 CE). She was the first of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) wives to die after Khadijah (رضئ الله تعالى عنہا).

The Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) personally led her janazah (funeral prayer). She was buried in Jannat al-Baqi, the blessed graveyard of Madinah where many of the Prophet's family and Companions rest. Her passing was mourned not only by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و آله وسلم) and her co-wives, but by the poor of Madinah—many of whom had felt her kindness long before she entered the Prophet's household.